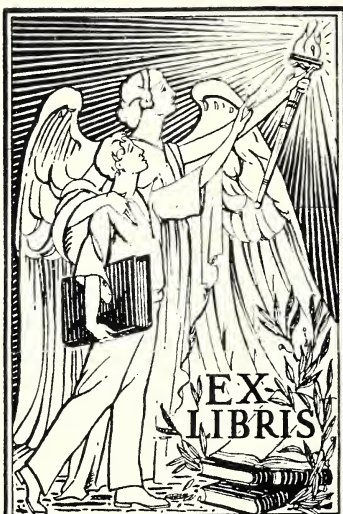


Werner, Mona M.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN THE
DIVISION FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSI-
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Collection development in the Division for the Library of Congress

Miss Mona M. Werner, Head of Collection Development, describes the problems of selection in the Division of the Blind and Physically Handicapped and its attempts to find solutions.

Building a collection is no easy task. It can be frustrating, but it becomes even more trying when the usual problems—developing a basic core-collection of materials while meeting the demand for current popular books—are compounded by the necessity to decide whether the books selected can be produced at a reasonable cost in a form other than print. This is the task faced by the Library of Congress Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

The division serves approximately 478,000 readers through a national network of 153 local and regional libraries. Each year it produces 2,500 titles in various media—braille, discs, and cassettes—for an audience ranging from pre-school age to centenarians with widely varying reading tastes and needs. The program is based on the philosophy that blind and handicapped individuals who cannot use conventional print should have access to the same materials available to sighted and mobile readers. This includes the usual basic and current materials stocked by most libraries, as well as the popular paperbacks and magazines found at drug stores and newsstands.

Unique problems faced in producing library materials in special media complicates the division's selection process. Technical considerations and the cost of producing,

housing, and circulating these special materials preclude selection of many standard reference tools such as the *World Almanac* or the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Moreover, before the materials can be reproduced, copyright clearances must be obtained. Obviously, collections and anthologies like the *Oxford Book of Verse* requiring permission from not one but many copyright holders must be ruled out as impractical from the outset. Likewise, books relying on photographs, illustrations, charts, or elaborate tables must also be rejected. The division has been able to purchase some desirable titles in braille from English-speaking countries where blanket copyright permission exists for the reproduction in braille of any title published. These problems are addressed in the book selection policy. What the policy does not address is what specific criteria will be used for improving the division's collection in quality and depth within program limitations.

Book Selection Policy

In 1974, a group of twenty-one consultants—representatives of consumer groups, consumers, and librarians—met at the division to advise on the development of a new book selection policy. The resulting policy states the division's position on adding materials to the national collection and provides broad, gen-

eral guidelines for selection. The group in its discussion made it apparent that if the division were to meet its obligations to its clientele, something more was needed than a revised book selection policy. Work was begun on the development of a plan which would provide for systematic development of the national collection and the more effective fulfillment of readers' needs.

The selection process under the plan is comparable to procedures applied in public and university libraries: professional staff specialists aid in the selection of materials by assuming responsibility for developing areas in which they have expertise. Assignments depend on the staff member's educational background, work experience, and interests. Detailed guidelines for selecting and evaluating titles have been drafted for staff use. Using the expertise of specialists familiar with the program and the readers' needs will improve the quality of selection.

The plan differs from conventional methods of collection building in that book quotas for categories and specific media are established based on monies appropriated and earmarked by Congress. The number of titles to be added to the collection is controlled not only by funds available but by producer capabilities as well.

The plan's primary objective is to produce a balanced collection. Basic

The need for broader preparation of school media specialists, at both preservice and continuing education levels, in media selection. Although library education programs are probably doing more about this concern than ever before, examples can be found almost daily of the need for fuller understanding of the characteristics of various presentation forms, as they are described by Tosti and Ball,² and for more closely defined criteria by which to evaluate the quality of visual representations and auditory materials. Similarly, we need to give more attention, in materials evaluation work, to the evaluation of textbooks and instructional systems, accepting the responsibility of school media specialists for participation in selection of these materials as recommended in *Media Programs: District and School*.³ Effective participation in this role requires knowledge and application of "systems" approaches to appraisal of instructional materials in terms of their learning objectives, their target audiences, the consistency of approach and methodology to intent, and other such considerations. The pioneering efforts of the Educational Products Information Exchange (EPIE) in its *Report* series provide a useful model, and basic guidelines are developed in *Report* No. 54: "Improving Materials Selection Procedures: A Basic 'How To' Handbook."⁴

The need for active participation by teachers in collection building, a concern that follows from the preceding statements. The idea is far from new but it is also, in my observation, far from being realized in many situations. Teachers may be hesitant to make requests for materials because they feel inadequate in knowledge of materials or do not view the media center as a source of "teaching" materials or "don't have time"—another way of expressing the same problems. Or, they may make questionable suggestions or place demands far exceeding present budget capabilities. Whatever the particular situation, most of the

media specialists with whom I work recognize the need to work further with teachers in the cooperative selection of materials. The most promising avenue, they report, is the establishment of a media advisory committee whose membership includes representative teachers, principal, and media specialist. Together they identify needs in the present collection, establish priorities for expenditure of funds to improve the collection, and plan for the reevaluation of existing materials. Achievement of joint responsibility of this order, coupled with opportunities for inservice education of teachers in materials evaluation, can lead to the development of media center collections that serve as the backbone, rather than an enrichment source, for the instructional program. Such a view of the collection is the subject of my final comment.

The need for a broader view of what should be represented in a school media collection, taking into account the changing demands of the instructional program and the changing levels of maturity, awareness, and interest on the part of students. As one example, a shift to elective courses rather than a single required course in a given subject area can mean dramatic shifts in the demands on materials. Duplicate titles once needed to support assigned readings may now gather dust. So may materials selected from outmoded perceptions of students' need to know, or current interests, or preferences among media formats. Continuous "audience research," to borrow Father Cuklin's term, is needed to connect to the concerns of students now. Protectionism is an unrealistic approach. So is the old notion of the "balanced" collection, in the sense of holdings neatly distributed over classification areas, or in the sense of prescribed ratios of different media formats. Betty Fast discussed "unbalanced" ideas in collection development in a recent issue of *Wilson Library Bulletin*, presenting alternatives by which to achieve

saturation coverage for particular topics or units, thereby demonstrating the potential contribution of the media center collection to teaching and learning—and generating the demand for increased budgetary provisions for essential resources.⁵ Further support for flexibility in collections is found in the 1975 standards, *Media Programs: District and School*, in which the chapter on collections groups related presentation forms, including the various types of materials and related equipment in each such category, and presents recommendations that encourage each school to develop the "mix" of formats most appropriate to the needs and purposes of its user group. □

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3. Tosti, Donald T., and Ball, John R. "A Behavioral Approach to Instructional Design and Media Selection," *AV Communication Review* 17 (Spring 1969): 5-25.
4. American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Media Programs: District and School*. Chicago: American Library Association; Washington, D.C.: Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1975.
5. "Improving Materials Selection Procedures: A Basic 'How to' Approach," *EPIE Educational Product Report*, No. 54 (June 1973).
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ind and Physically Handicapped,

Mona M. Werner

titles must be selected and produced in appropriate media along with current items. The chart (*Figure 1*) reflects the division's proposed production and selection plan for fiscal year 1977.

What do these figures mean in terms of selection? In the case of juvenile materials, 100 titles will be mass produced on discs, 160 on cassette, and 70 in braille, the remainder being produced by volunteers for limited distribution. The titles selected will be allocated among four basic grade levels—kindergarten-2, 3-5, 6-9, and young adult. About 40 percent of the titles will be nonfiction, 60 percent fiction; 50 to 55 percent of the selections will be retrospective. The same ratios will apply to adult titles, where the problem is one of dividing the selections between subject areas and literary categories while at the same time making certain that appropriate matter is available in all media. Establishing priorities and quotas for media will provide the staff with a clear-cut picture of what is needed for the collection and how those needs are being met. It is understood the quotas are flexible and serve as selection guides. Publishing trends and changing readers' needs can affect them.

Success of the collection development plan is based on active participation of relevant publics. Priorities and quotas should not and cannot be established in a vacuum. Each spring an ad hoc advisory group made up of representatives from the service network and or-

ganized groups of readers is convened to solicit information and expertise. The 1976 session submitted useful recommendations on book selection and priorities in terms of trends and media and production assignments. The division suggested that groups represented at the session should form selection committees as a means of conveying information to the division on a continuing basis. The group recommended that network librarians be urged to become directly involved

in the selection process and recommend retrospective titles in their areas of expertise.

On March 5, 1976 staff specialists met to review the group's recommendations. A priority list and quotas were then drafted for the new fiscal year.

While the new collection development plan does not solve all the division's selection problems, it does establish the framework for more effective and efficient collection building. □

Production and Selection for Fiscal Year 1977*

	<u>Titles on Disc</u>	<u>Titles on Cassette</u>	<u>Titles in Braille</u>	<u>Total</u>
Titles for mass production and circulation	500	800	350	1,650
Titles for limited production and circulation	- 0 -	500	350	850
Total	500	1,300	700	2,500
Juvenile titles to be selected (20%)	100	260	140	500
Adult titles to be selected (80%)	400	1,040	560	2,000
Total	500	1,300	700	2,500
Nonfiction titles (40%)	200	520	280	1,000
Fiction titles (60%)	300	780	420	1,500
Total	500	1,300	700	2,500

* Fiscal year 1977 begins October 1, 1976, and ends September 30, 1977.

Figure 1.

The author reviews in great detail the scope of selection tools, including indexes for specialized materials and promotional materials from publishers and wholesalers. Conclusions are drawn on what is still lacking in selection tools and what new selection sources are still needed. A bibliography of current and useful selection tools completes the article.

Selection tools - what's available?

Jean W. Boyer

In surveying the field for general reviewing journals of interest to academic libraries we find that most library and book trade journals have been around for a long time. The most recent is *Choice*, which was started over a decade ago to fill a need for reviews of titles suitable for college libraries. New journals tend to be limited to specific types of material, e.g., *Microform Review*, *Reference Services Review*. It is a dismal fact that all the review sources together cover only about one-quarter of the annual publishing output of the United States. Thus in order to acquire needed titles more quickly academic libraries have turned to additional sources, making their own judgements rather than relying solely on reviews. Many libraries elect to use approval plans where the preselection is made by a dealer and the books are examined for suitability upon receipt. For small press books and such special fields as experimental fiction, few of which are covered by reviews, libraries may rely upon the expertise of a knowledgeable dealer to supply what they need. Many have resorted to using for selection purposes tools which are produced as sources of bibliographic information, e.g., Library of Congress prof-

slips, or to using the publicity material distributed by publishers. What then is available?

General Selection

The big three library and book trade journals for general selection are *Choice*, *Library Journal* and *Publishers Weekly*. *Choice* provides critical, comparative reviews for about 8000 titles annually, over a broad range of subjects. The titles are selected for suitability for undergraduate collections but many are also appropriate for large research libraries. Special features in each issue include "Periodicals for college libraries", and one or two long reviews of important reference titles or large sets. Until recently it handled reprints but these have now been dropped.

Library Journal covers about 5700 titles annually, and includes more "current interest" titles but fewer scholarly and technical titles than does *Choice*. Reviews are prompt because many titles are reviewed in proof, and the fiction section has good coverage of contemporary novels. Special features are a regular section on recent journals and the LJ Checklist, a guide to free or inexpensive pamphlets and bibliographies. Both *Library*

Journal and *Choice* offer reviews-on-cards as an additional service.

Publishers Weekly has two major sections of selection value. "Forecasts" reviews before publication about 3000 titles annually, a good source for libraries wishing to keep a step ahead of public demand. The *Weekly Record*, now issued separately provides comprehensive coverage of current titles published in the U.S. It is an alphabetical listing with full Library of Congress cataloging data. An alternative to the alphabetical listing is the monthly cumulation in Dewey classification order, *American Book Publishing Record*. The latter is more convenient where several people handle different subject areas.

Following these three titles we find a number of other titles of lesser scope: *New York Times Book Review*, *New York Review of Books*, *Saturday Review*, all of which have some value as selection sources but which do not handle sufficient numbers of titles to be more than supplementary tools for academic library selection. More useful, though a foreign publication, is *Times Literary Supplement*, which reviews many titles of interest to American academic libraries. General interest periodicals such as

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